Young Gods

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Young Gods

by Foxtrot (SolidState)

Summary

Trying to tame Will Graham was like when people with too much money and not enough sense try to keep a wild cat in the house; they'll swear it's trained and that it's a part of the family and they think it loves them because sometimes it purrs by the fireplace, but sooner-or-later it'll rip you apart. You can't tame a lion just because you cage it inside. It will always be wild. It will always act on it's nature and the only one at fault is you for thinking you could domesticate it.

Notes

Kind of obsessed with the idea of these two just blatantly out there existing like regular folks, doing mundane couples shit, going on vaycay, while everyone at the FBI is like *surprised pikachu face*

[update: did a lil doodle of the picture described :)]

See the end of the work for more notes

It was an arguably innocent photograph, all things considered.

A glossy Polaroid photo from one of those newer camera models that where popular with Tumblr kids, the kind that came in pastel colors and sold overpriced film at Walmart for $15 a box, they where so generic as to be essentially untraceable. It would have been like trying to track down every middle-aged man that ordered a 'grand slam' from Denny's last Thursday. For anyone else the existence of photographic evidence would be their demise, but Hannibal and Will where not 'anyone else' and Jack knew he wouldn't get a single inch out of Freddie Lounds either. They wouldn't need to make threats for her to keep her silence, she'd keep quiet for the sake of book deals and ad revenue alone.

The image was uploaded to TattleCrime under the click-bait headline;

EXCLUSIVE INTELL!
MURDER HUSBANDS ON VACATION IN UNKNOWN LOCALE!?

The attached image featured a picturesque sweeping blue sky full of fat fluffy clouds drifting by, the faint suggestion of sand and surf at the bottom corner held no identifying markers to clue the viewer in to where the picture was taken – it could have just as easily been a packed beach in Florida as it could have been a private villa in Aruba. The subjects of the photograph where far more interesting; Hannibal was sipping from a chilled glass, something a rich copper brown and undoubtedly more expensive than Jack's entire paycheck, a white straw boater perched on his head that cast a severe shadow across the sharp planes of his face. He was looking at Will with a brow quirked and a faint but fond smile tugging at his lips. Will was mid-way through throwing his arm around Hannibal's shoulders, the motion leaving a slightly blurry trail in the image. In his hand draped around the other man Will was holding a colorful looking slushy drink with a little paper umbrella sticking out of it, the other arm was outstretched to hold the Polaroid camera as far back as he could to capture both of them in frame. There was a healthy smear of tan across the bridge of his nose and cheeks, his eyes vivid and bright against the blue of the sky. In contrast to Hannibal's (typical) more reserved expression, Will was grinning wide with laughter.

They looked like any other couple on vacation.

The sheer normalcy of it left something cold and painful settling in Jack's stomach, a kind of weary yearning for a time that never existed, a time where this picture was normal and didn't send the public into a frenzy. A time where this was something he could pin on his fridge and point out when company was over; *'These are my friends, I introduced them to each other'* he would say and proudly recount what a brilliant psychiatrist Hannibal Lecter was and how Will Graham's incredible skills have aided the FBI for years.

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Jack Crawford hadn't been a good enough friend though, had he? He didn't take care of the person who needed him the most or maybe...maybe it was just that he hadn't seen, hadn't *known*. Not where it mattered. Will had always been 'off', a polite person would call him quiet and awkward - an honest person would call him disturbed and off-putting. It wasn't like Jack didn't know that Will was...troubled, it was impossible not to see it the very first moment he laid eyes on this young man with his hunched shoulders and anxious rabbit quick eyes. Will Graham had lived in what he himself so eloquently called 'bum-fuck nowhere' and liked it that way, he tucked himself far from polite society like a man that knew he had the plague and everyone else just hadn't seen him rotting from the inside yet. A self-imposed quarantine.

Jack should've kept him there.

A better friend wouldn't think like this. A better friend would think *I should have done more, better, something else, anything else.* A better friend wouldn't think of Will Graham like a beast with rabies; like he was Old Yeller and Jack the benevolent owner that should've taken him behind the shed to be put out of his misery. Jack Crawford was never a good enough friend and this was punishment for it. Punishment for what he'd said about Molly too, he was sure. It was barely a year after Will 'vanished' that Molly remarried and had her last name discretely changed in an effort to keep her new identity out of the press and Jack Crawford had made some damning statements about this. Statements he had no right making. It wasn't so much that Jack really felt she was betraying Will so much as it just hurt having to face the reality of him never coming back. If he ever did, it wouldn't be the same Will that left.

If even Molly knew it then what the fuck was Jack holding out for?

Molly didn't see the BSHCI security footage. *I need you. Please. Hannibal....*She didn't have to sort through all of Will's clothes mixed with Hannibal's in the cliff-house and wait out agonizingly long days for the DNA results to come in on the bloodied bandages. Jack never even told her about Will's wedding ring. Nobody remembered seeing it before they left for Hannibal's safe house and nobody could recall anyone coming or going from Jack's office before he found it sitting on his desk – it was simply there when he returned and Jack couldn't pretend any longer. Molly hadn't seen any of this and yet still she *knew*. Some part of her must have known all along that Will was never hers at all.

Trying to tame Will Graham was like when people with too much money and not enough sense try to keep a wild cat in the house; they'll swear it's trained and that it's a part of the family and they think it loves them because sometimes it purrs by the fireplace, but sooner-or-later it'll rip you apart. You can't tame a lion just because you cage it inside. It will always be wild. It will always act on it's nature and the only one at fault is you for thinking you could domesticate it.

Will had always been a feral creature, he could not – *would not* – be contained.

In the weeks before the photograph was posted to TattleCrime Freddie Lounds had been especially heated in her reporting on Jack's statements about Molly Graham becoming Molly Dupont, her comment section read similarly vitriolic. There was a lengthy thread of people claiming Jack was 'going absolutely bananas' over losing his best profiler to Hannibal the Cannibal and it was only a matter of time before he was forced into retirement or quit outright. Right now Jack wondered if they weren't far off, he certainly felt like he was going 'round the bend just looking at Will's beatific smiling face. Will never smiled like that before Hannibal.

'She's given up on him just like that. How could she do that to Walter, he was practically the boys father.' Freddie quoted. *'He could turn up tomorrow and now what would he have to go back to?'*

Jack hadn't really meant any of it to begin with, it was just hurtful words designed to take the pain off of himself. Maybe some part of him thought it would make Will feel guilty, a sense of duty, that would compel him back and reveal it was all just a big misunderstanding. Sometimes he didn't even know what part of it hurt the most and it seemed to change day-to-day; was it his own inaction and callous neglect of someone he claimed was a friend? Was it trusting Hannibal to take care of Will when Jack wasn't up to the task? Or was it that Will picked Hannibal over him? Over Molly and Walter? Alana? All of them? The worst part was he couldn't even blame Will for making that choice when the truth of the matter is nobody saw Will like Hannibal did, nobody else even tried to.

Nobody had *wanted* to.

Jack Crawford stared and stared and *stared* at the photograph for what felt like mere moments but turned out to be hours. He stared at the handsome quirk of Hannibal's lips as he gazed sideways at Will with an expression of such raw open adoration he felt like an interloper walking in on something deeply intimate, something he wasn't ever supposed to see. Jack stared at the little crinkle of Will's eyes, sea-glass and striking, as he smiled wide – lips parted in delighted laughter as he leaned slightly off balance against Hannibal to take the picture. Jack had never seen Will laugh like this, in a way that set his whole face alight and made him look radiant.

Hindsight is 20/20 and Jack wondered with a detached sort of amusement how had he been so goddamn stupid. Maybe he really was just as 'obliviously heterosexual' as Freddie Lounds claimed in this newest blog post. It was enough to make him laugh because hell, what else was he supposed to do? If he didn't laugh now he'd cry. Looking at everything in retrospect made it far too easy to understand the hows and the whys; Hannibal was undoubtedly charming, genuinely so even outside of his 'person suit', and Jack wasn't blind enough not to notice the man was uniquely handsome. Will too had always been eye-catching with his dark hair and arrestingly bright eyes, but while he lacked Dr.Lecter's social graces and charm Will carried with him an aura of something crackling and raw – a building storm compacted into a human shell.

Sticking the two of them in one room left the air feeling charged, heated and heady, with an undefinable energy that raised the hair on your arms. Like the calm before lightning strikes too close or the sensation of being stalked in the woods by some animal you couldn't see. Achilles and Patroclus, so formidable the gods themselves had to step in.

Jack Crawford was no god.

But these men in the photo very well might be.

Foxtrot

End Notes

Imagine the ad revenue that blog would get, go off Freddie get that hustle money.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!